7: Furnivall G-4, 5 (no date) 1948 AL1 Southeast Asia AL1

661 with a Government intervening so actively in every branch of social life, seems almost incredible. That, however, is certainly the general opinion. For example, the People's Banks, in dealing with applications for loans, depend largely on reports from the village headman as to the character and circumstances of the applicants. This would seem to provide a ready means by which the headman might supplement his income. In Burma it was regarded as natural and not improper that the headman should charge applicants for loans from Government a fee for making his report. In Java a suggestion to this effect met with the response, 'But there would be a complaint!', and that was taken as a sufficient and final answer. So far as the general opinion as to the absence of corruption is well-founded, there would seem to be two explanations: one is the tradition of 'complaints'; the other, the permanence of the Regent.

694 661 As already explained, it has been a tradition from the early days of Liberal rule that the Controleur, without actually instigating complaints, should encourage the people to complain of any oppressive act. The Liberals prided themselves on relieving the people from the oppression by their native chieftains that had been one feature of the Culture system, and one chief duty of the Controleur, as he moved among the people, was to detect and bring to light oppression by encouraging them to complain, so that the 'complaint' has become a word of magic. In Burma anyone may petition the local magistrate; but the petition must bear a court fee stamp; in practice it is written by a legal practitioner or by a licensed petition writer; it must be presented in open court, and must disclose some matter in respect of which the law entitles the petitioner to relief. It is an application to an officer of the law for some action according to the law. In Java anyone may complain, orally or in writing, at any time, on any matter; no stamp or court fee is required; there are no licensed petition writers, and anyone may write the complaint. Even diehards recognized one good feature in the nationalist movement: that the nationalist leaders encouraged the people to formulate complaints. The tradition goes back far beyond the Liberal period; it dates from the principle adopted in 1803 that Government should act 'more like a father studying to promote the welfare of his family than a ruler governing his subjects'; the Liberals merely devised machinery for making the tradition more effective. Thus the 'complaint' has come to take a place alongside 'gentle pressure' as a distinctive feature of Dutch colonial practice.